

REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested in light of the above amendments and the following remarks.

Claims 4, 6, and 8 have been cancelled, thereby obviating the objections thereto. Regarding the objection to claim 5, Fig. 1 of the application illustrates the L-shaped suction slot recited in claim 5. This feature is identified in Fig. 1 by reference character 27.

Claims 1-3, 7, and 9 stand rejected, under 35 USC §102(b), as being anticipated by Inoue et al. (US 5,450,894). Claims 3, 5, and 9 stand rejected, under 35 USC §103(a), as being unpatentable over Inoue. Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections with the following remarks.

Applicants submit that the applicable field of the claimed invention is absolutely different from that of Inoue's invention. The claimed invention provides a novel, protecting medical-treatment chair that employs an air-curtain shield to: 1) prevent the occurrence of cross-infection among people due to air-borne germs or sputter, and 2) provide a clean-air environment for medical treatment of a patient suffering from pulmonary disease.

By contrast to the field of the claimed invention, Inoue's device relates to the field of air conditioning a space around

the seat of an automobile (Inoue col. 1, lines 8-9). And Inoue has specifically defined the term "air conditioning" as meaning "to control the temperature of the air in a cabin for a vehicle by cooling or heating the air" (col. 1, lines 11-14).

The present invention provides an isolated cabin that is partially surrounded by an air curtain. The air curtain is produced by a vertical downwardly-laminated airflow of proper speed, not by a lateral downwardly airflow (or called pseudo-laminated airflow or pseudo-air-curtain). The use of the vertical downwardly-laminated airflow as an air-curtain shield, which partially surrounds the cabin to isolate its interior from the exterior environment, is an indispensable technical feature of this invention.

Because a pseudo-air-curtain or lateral airflow is not capable of isolating the interior of a protecting medical-treatment chair cabin, a medical-treatment chair employing the pseudo-air-curtain or lateral airflow cannot: (1) prevent the occurrence of cross-infection among people due to air-borne germs or sputter or (2) provide a clean-air environment for medical treatment of a patient suffering from pulmonary disease.

Moreover, Inoue relates to a device for air conditioning a space around the seat of an automobile (col. 1, lines 8-9). This device controls the temperature of the air around an open cabin

of the seat by cooling or heating the air. More especially, Inoue's 1st through 57th embodiments disclose cooling or heating a pseudo-air-curtain or lateral airflow that air conditions an open space around a seat so as to increase the power consumption efficiency of an automobile's engine (col. 1, lines 59-61).

Moreover, claim 1 recites a bag-shaped inner space that is formed inside the main-body of the chair and partially surrounded by a vertical laminated-downward air-curtain shield, which cooperates with the chair to create an isolated cabin. The main-body includes a seat surface, a seat back, and two hood-walls that form a bag-shaped inner space. The use of two hood-walls to form a bag-shaped inner space is another indispensable technical feature of the claimed invention.

The Office Action cites the combination of features from Inoue's Figs. 1 and 33 to support the anticipation rejection of claim 1 (Office Action section 3). However, Inoue discloses that Figs. 32 and 33 illustrate a fourth embodiment of Inoue's device. Inoue does not appear to disclose an embodiment combining the features illustrated in Figs. 1 and 33, as proposed in the Office Action. And inspection of Figs. 32 and 33 reveals that Inoue's fourth embodiment does not provide a bag-shaped and isolated space inside the seat and does not use vertical downwardly-laminated airflow as a air-curtain shield to isolate the inner

space, because only "a small amount of air" issues from circular openings 722 into the inner space of the seat (see Inoue col. 16, line 68, through col. 17, line 2).

Furthermore, as illustrated in Inoue's Fig. 32, seat back 52 of Inoue's fourth embodiment does not form a top-hood and does not provide an air flow passage inside the seat back, as does the claimed seat back.

In summary, the claimed invention has two indispensable technical features, which are not disclosed by Inoue, that function to prevent the occurrence of cross-infection, due to air-borne germs or sputter, and to provide a clean-air environment for medical treatment of a patient suffering from pulmonary disease. These two features are:

1. a vertical downwardly-laminated airflow that provides an air-curtain shield (not a lateral downwardly airflow or pseudo-laminated airflow, as disclosed by Inoue); and

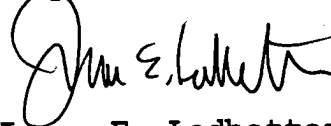
2. the combination of a seat surface, a seat back, and two hood-walls that form an isolated and bag-shaped inner cabin inside the protecting medical-treatment chair.

In accordance with the above discussion, Applicants submit that Inoue does not anticipate the subject matter defined by claim 1. Therefore, allowance of claim 1 and all claims dependent therefrom is warranted.

In view of the above, it is submitted that this application is in condition for allowance and a notice to that effect is respectfully solicited.

If any issues remain which may best be resolved through a telephone communication, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned at the local Washington, D.C. telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



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